



GUATEMALA SCHOLARS NETWORK NEWS

August 2007

Obituaries

We are very saddened by the deaths of Aura Marina Arriola and René Poitevin Dardón. Aura Marina died on the 15 February 2007. René passed away on May 9, 2007. They will be truly missed.

Tributo a Aura Marina Arriola

Susanne Jonas, marzo 2007

Me faltan palabras adecuadas para expresar el dolor de imaginar los mundos de Guatemala y México sin la presencia de Aura Marina. Su muerte deja un vacío enorme en los dos mundos.

Tuve el honor y el gusto de conocerle a Aura Marina durante décadas. Cuando nació mi hija en 1976, la nombramos Rebeca Marina, la parte de "Marina" por supuesto por Aura Marina, para que fuera tan fuerte como ella. En los años recientes, nos vimos, Aura Marina y yo, siempre que coincidíamos o en Guatemala o en México -- la última vez en agosto de 2006 en México, ocasión en la cual, irónicamente, ella me dio consejos acerca de la salud.

Releyendo ahora su "auto-etnografía," me hace reflexionar

acerca de las múltiples dimensiones y los múltiples mundos de Aura Marina. Su libro forma la base para revisar de nuevo la historia de Guatemala (y de muchos otros mundos), siempre con un lente crítico. Pero también es un libro sobre las contradicciones del amor y de la dignidad en tiempos de guerra.

Aunque tuvimos formaciones formales distintas, en años recientes, Aura y yo llegábamos a coincidir en preocuparnos por la suerte de las migrantes guatemaltecas pasando por México hacia EEUU -- un sujeto y un actor social cada vez más presente en la región que nos une.

¡Ojalá que nuestra amistad podría haber seguido por unas décadas más! Pero Aura Marina seguirá presente en mi corazón, como en los corazones de muchas otras.

Les mando a todas que están realizando este tributo a la vida de Aura Marina Arriola un abrazo solidario, y me junto con Uds. este día.

GSN coordinator and editor of *GSN News* is Susan Berger. Please send items for the *News* to her at Fordham University, Political Science Department, 113 West 60th Street, New York, NY 10023, 212-636-6362, or berger@fordham.edu. R. McKenna Brown is the GSN treasurer and maintains the mailing list. Send dues and changes of address to him at Guatemala Scholars Network, School of World Studies, Virginia Commonwealth University, P.O. Box 842021, Richmond, VA 23284-2021; 804-827-1111, mbrown@vcu.edu. Ted Fischer, with the help of the Vanderbilt Anthropology Department, manages the GSN website at: <http://www.Vanderbilt.edu/AnS/Anthro/GSN/>.

Tributo a René Poitevin Dardón

From Susanne Jonas:

"On Wednesday (May 9), Dr. Rene Poitevin died. He had been the director of FLACSO/Guatemala for over a decade (roughly 1989-2000), and was now Executive Director of Fundacion Soros/Guatemala. He was a great scholar and made incredible things happen at FLACSO/Guatemala. I worked very closely with him during that entire period, and was beginning to work with him at Soros. He was also a cherished personal friend of mine. It is a great loss for Guatemalan scholars (and scholars of Guatemala up here).

Abrazos, Susanne"

From FLASCO:

La Secretaría General de la FLACSO, en nombre de todo el cuerpo académico, estudiantil y administrativo de esta Facultad, lamenta profundamente el deceso del Profesor Doctor René Poitevin, acaecido en la ciudad de Guatemala.

Distinguido colega y amigo, el doctor Poitevin jugó un papel destacado en la vida política y académica de su país, así como en el desarrollo institucional de la FLACSO, habiendo servido con total dedicación y entrega a lo largo de muchos años como Coordinador Académico de la Secretaría General, Director del Programa FLACSO-Guatemala y Director de la Sede Académica FLACSO-Guatemala.

Licenciado en ciencias jurídicas y sociales, abogado y notario, por la Universidad de San Carlos de

Guatemala. Doctor en sociología por la Universidad de París. Fue profesor de la Universidad de San Carlos y de la Universidad Rafael Landívar, en Guatemala, profesor invitado en diversas universidades de Centroamérica y Europa.

Consultor de organismos internacionales y durante más de diez años dirigió la Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales, FLACSO-Sede Guatemala. Se desempeñó como Vicerrector académico de la Universidad Rafael Landívar, columnista del periódico , y como investigador de FLACSO-Guatemala en estudios sobre democracia y juventud en Centroamérica. A su muerte, era director ejecutivo de la Fundación Soros de Guatemala.

Entre sus publicaciones se encuentran: Nadie quiere soñar despierto; Mujeres, niños y ajuste estructural (coautores Eugenia Castellanos de Ponciano Carlos González); Jóvenes que trabajan (coautor Edgar Pape Yalibat); Los desafíos de la democracia en Centroamérica (coautor Alexander Sequén-Mónchez); Los jóvenes guatemaltecos a finales del siglo XX (y otros autores(as)); Estado, participación popular y democratización (coautores Víctor Gálvez Borrell y Carlos González).

GSN Business

GSN at LASA: GSN will hold its business meeting at LASA in Montreal on Friday, September 7, 2007 from 8:00pm-9:30pm. Hope to see you there!

Updating Member Information: We would like to update the list of GSN

members and emails on the GSN website. Please check the website (<http://www.Vanderbilt.edu/AnS/Anthro/GSN>) to see if you are listed and your information is correct. Send any changes or additions to Ted Fischer at edward.f.fischer@vanderbilt.edu.

Human Rights Observer and Study Abroad

BECOME A HUMAN RIGHTS OBSERVER IN GUATEMALA!: The Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala (NISGUA) has several openings for qualified volunteers to act as human rights observers as part of the Guatemala Accompaniment Project (G.A.P.). NISGUA is one of many organizations around the world that employs accompaniment as a vital tool in the global struggle for the respect of human rights. In the Guatemalan context, accompaniment creates a non-violent response to the threats, harassment, and violence faced by survivors of Guatemala's 36-year-long civil war and grassroots organizations working for justice and

human rights. To this end, NISGUA's Guatemala Accompaniment Project (G.A.P.) places long-term volunteers side-by-side with people in rural communities and with organizations in an effort to deter human rights violations. The dissuasive physical presence of these volunteers, known as accompaniers, provides a measure of security and creates space for Guatemalan communities and groups to organize in defense of their rights. Accompaniers also monitor and report on the human rights situation and alert the international community to abuses. For more information, contact: NISGUA/G.A.P., 1830 Connecticut Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20009, (202) 265- 8713, gap@nisgua.org.

Study Abroad in Antigua, Guatemala at CIRMA

The Center for Mesoamerican Research (CIRMA) and the University of Arizona invite you to study abroad in Antigua, Guatemala. Deepen your understanding of the social, historical and political dynamics of Central America and learn Spanish while living in an historic town surrounded by volcanoes.

At CIRMA, you can study the history

of Central American revolutions, Mayan culture, human rights, anthropology, archeology, literature and politics, as well as Spanish and/or a Mayan language. Personalized classes are taught by knowledgeable Central American scholars and promote an understanding of the region from the "ground up."

Students receive a University of Arizona transcript. Most classes receive three undergraduate credits. Classes may be taken for honors credit, and some classes can be taken for graduate credit.

The academic program is complemented by field trips and a colloquium series featuring outstanding scholars, artists and activists. At CIRMA, students have access to one of the best libraries in Latin America.

Students may also complete an

internship at CIRMA or volunteer or do an internship with social organizations in and around Antigua. Students live with Guatemalan families in Antigua.

For a complete schedule of classes and registration information, to see photos of CIRMA and Antigua and to read what other students have to say about living and studying in Guatemala: go to:

<http://www.cirma.org.gt> and click on "study abroad".

Announcements

University of Washington Guatemala

Project: On March 31, 2007, the University of Washington Guatemala Project held a benefit dinner and auction entitled "El Vuelo del Quetzal," at the Knights of Columbus Hall. The event, which was planned, organized, and executed by students who attended Prof. Angelina Snodgrass Godoy's 2005 and 2006 study abroad programs on human rights in Guatemala, aimed to raise \$50,000 to support education for social change in coffee-growing communities. Thanks to the extraordinary hard work of the students and the generosity of the UW community, the event was successful in reaching this goal – and even overshooting it by several thousand dollars!

The UW Guatemala Project is a partnership between students in Prof. Godoy's classes and the young people who pick coffee on plantations in San Marcos, Guatemala. Designed in conjunction with the NGO *Movimiento de Trabajadores Campesinos* (Movement of Peasant Workers) in

San Marcos, the project adopts an innovative, integral approach to education, recognizing that poor educational outcomes are not only a reflection of scarce funds for tuition, but also the frequent lack of community-based support for students. The funds raised will be used to help empower young leaders from 6 coffee growing municipalities by engaging them in a regional support network and encouraging small-scale development projects of their own design, in addition to helping cover their tuition costs. Future UW classes will visit these students and further the partnership with them through participation in exchange activities. Now that the project has achieved its first major fundraising objective, students in the UWGP hope to see its work grow in new directions, continuing to empower young people in both the United States and Guatemala to become human rights leaders. We are already at work on some new ideas.

Prof. Godoy's class, a 12-credit intensive seminar for

undergraduates, focuses on taking the study of human rights "beyond the books" to immerse students in the realities of human rights as they are experienced on the ground in Guatemala, exploring the issues scholars, aid workers, policymakers and human rights advocates face of addressing past atrocities while adapting to respond to new challenges. It focuses on themes that are broadly applicable to other countries and contexts, including Cold War armed conflicts, maquiladora ("sweatshop") labor, trade agreements, controversies about development, and fair trade. Rather than defining Guatemala's plight as an object of foreign scrutiny, the course explores connections to the United States, and Seattle in particular, exploring students' relationships to the global dynamics that manifest themselves in Guatemala and beyond and raising

questions of accountability and social change. After returning from Guatemala in 2005, UW students began the effort that is today the UW Guatemala Project, a hands-on human rights effort in which successive classes have had the opportunity to participate as part of the study abroad seminar. Participation in the UWGP has become a key way for students to stay engaged in the issues examined in Guatemala even after their return to Seattle, and in many cases, even after their graduation from the university.

For more information about the UW Guatemala Project, or to make a donation, please visit <http://students.washington.edu/uwgp>.

For more information about Prof. Godoy's study abroad seminar, please visit <http://faculty.washington.edu/agodoy/Guatemala%20study%20abroad.html>.

Reviews

International Adoptions from Guatemala

Carol A. Smith, UC Davis

Goodbye Baby is a 58-minute video documentary on international adoptions from Guatemala produced by well known documentary maker, Patricia Goudvis, who has herself adopted two Guatemalan children. The documentary asks "[are] rich foreigners buying babies or are poor children being offered the prospect of a better life?" It treats Guatemala's situation of being a primary source for babies to hopeful parents in the West (primarily the US) just as the Guatemalan adoption

system is about to be terminated because of national and international critiques of the way the adoption process works there. It explores the critiques but is basically a defense of the process.

Guatemala has become the primary Latin American source of babies for US prospective parents over the same period that other Latin American countries (e.g., Mexico, Peru) have dried up as sources—mainly as "nationalist" critiques have developed in them against the empire to the North. Being a small country of only 12 million people, Guatemala is hardly the *primary* source of international adoptions to

the West—being significantly outnumbered by China and India (whose populations are more than a billion each). Guatemala remains, however the largest *per capita* exporter of babies, and Guatemala's very high birth rate does not fully account for this. Goudvis's documentary indicates that each year over the last five years until 2005 (when the documentary was produced) about 2500 legal international adoptions took place, mainly to US citizens. As recently as 1985, however, it shows there were only 420 international adoptions from Guatemala. It does not go back further, but I know that in the mid-1970s there were fewer than a dozen international adoptions. One sees, then, a tremendous growth in the adoption industry in recent years and the obvious question is why. The date of the international adoption surge in Guatemala suggests that it came about when the world came to know that the rural village massacres of the early 1980s left many small indigenous children in Guatemala without parents or even close kin. At the time of the massacres many such children were taken in by professional soldiers, a few by *gringo* workers or missionaries who lived in the country (see the film, *Discovering Dominga*). But no one has really followed up on that story and it is not clear the extent to which children from the 1980s massacres taken in by Guatemalans and foreigners were legally adopted as opposed to simply "taken in" (see below on that pattern in Guatemala). I had expected this documentary would say more about the timing of Western international adoption from

Guatemala, but it does not. Nor does it say anything about the high level of fear in many remote indigenous communities of "child theft" which has led to several major international incidents--wherein foreigners who seemed especially friendly to small children were attacked by locals and severely beaten or killed. It mentions "generalized" accusations of a system of "robaninos," but only as an example of sensationalist Guatemalan media which charges foreigners with interest in Guatemalan children for biomedical organ trafficking. There is no evidence that organ trafficking takes place in Guatemala, but it is now becoming clear that it happens in other poor countries (such as northeastern Brazil recently documented by Nancy Schepper Hughes in the 2007 *Anthropology Newsletter*), though not necessarily the organs of children. It is, nonetheless clear that rural indigenous peoples' DO fear child theft and one would think an investigation of this issue (i.e., of what rural people think and if they point to local cases of disappeared babies or children) was warranted. Given that Guatemalan lawyers routinely make \$20,000 U.S. dollars per adopted child and a lawyer can process several dozen or more a year, the issue of "buying children" is not as ludicrous as the documentary suggests, even if the identities of the "buyers" is not entirely clear. The documentary mainly emphasizes that poor Guatemalan women have too many children to properly care for them—and that Guatemala has many such poor women. Various voices in the film try to explain the

link between poverty and the availability of Guatemalan children for adoption. Some point to the fact that abortion is illegal in Guatemala (as it is in most of Latin America), some suggest that there are few jobs for women (though none provide information on informal employment by women on which Guatemalan statistics are poor), and some argue that Guatemalan men are *machista* and irresponsible. But the attributions are vague and do little to distinguish Guatemala from many other countries in Latin America where very few international adoptions take place. Few of the voices in the documentary are those of women who choose to give up one or more children; the only such voice is one urban non-indigenous woman who appears to have a very small kin network. The indirect attribution of why so many children are available in Guatemala is that poor and/or indigenous women are simply having "too many" children—and not by choice. I cannot speak to the issue of poor urban and/or Ladina women. But I know poor indigenous women still have a high fertility *goal* (which has diminished since the 1980s as child mortality has lessened from about ten live births to four to six. It is true that these women rarely use Western forms of birth control (which they distrust). More often they have their four to six children over a period of about 10-12 years and then have their tubes tied. But these particulars do not explain the very great difference between Guatemala and countries like Peru and Mexico (whose populations are respectively 4 and 10 larger than Guatemala's), whose rural people are equally poor, have high fertility (and mortality) rates, but

which have very few babies available for international adoption. Anthropologist, Laura Briggs, suggests a different explanation for the outsized pattern of international adoption in Guatemala from that told in the film and her view is well worth considering. (It is put forward in an article, "Making 'American' Families," pp. 344-365 in *Haunted by Empire*, Ann Laura Stoler, ed., 2006.) First, she observes a "new narrative of 'American' domesticity," wherein "white" elites adopt "foreign racial minorities" in order to "rescue" them—targeting "infamous" places like Guatemala, known for its poverty and brutality. This sentiment, she argues, embodies neo-liberal colonialism because of the way "transnational adoption is invested with colonial legacies and can be allied with U.S. state power and other kinds of violence (p. 348)." As she puts it, "trying to imagine internationally adopted children as the inheritors of their adoptive parents' culture and privilege is deeply problematic in a society [so markedly] stratified by race and national origin" (p. 349). The *gringo* narrative also illustrates a disjuncture between "Latin American ideologies of U.S. exploitation and a U.S. belief in our capacity to rescue 'them' (p. 350)." She mentions the "corrupting influence" of twenty thousand U.S. dollars per infant. And she notes that Guatemalan workers in human rights and the judicial system observe that while it is very difficult to prove an "international traffic in children," they also know very well how few *quetzales* it takes for the intermediaries in the international adoption process to procure a child. The lack of transparency in the five-

way transaction process (noted even in the documentary)—from birth mother to 1) a local intermediary, 2) one or more urban lawyers, 3) an adoption shelter, 4) the U.S. embassy, and 5) international adoptive parents—together with the power-stacking involved from givers to takers (not emphasized in the documentary), means that one would hear few complaints. The poor and powerless in such countries as Guatemala rarely encounter anyone who will *hear* their complaints, even when people in a few communities blindly strike out about the issue of child theft.

The documentary *does* describe, though briefly, the "intermediaries" in the process between the birth mothers and the lawyers who certify to the US embassy that the children are indeed the children of mothers who have signed away their rights to the child/children—proving that point by collecting DNA information from mother and child. But it does not explain why the US Embassy recently began insisting on genetic proof of a relationship between signer and child. Briggs may be overstating the case to note that most U.S. prospective parents seeking children to adopt in Latin America see poverty (of the child's parent or parents) as a "symptom of bad parenting from which U.S. families can rescue children," rather than being "a problem of international capital or a civil war in which the United States was anything but innocent" (p. 358). At the same time my own experience with having adopted a child from Guatemala (from a period long before the huge increase in its

elaborate organization of international adoptions) as well as with being questioned about it by U.S. people contemplating international adoption supports some of Briggs's argument.

People contemplating international adoption or those curious about the "origin" of my child suggests *many* middle to upper-middle class North Americans are now less fearful of adopting non-white children than they may have been in the past. But most US "liberals" still congratulate me from "rescuing" my child from a fate possibly only a little better than death (as do many urban Guatemalans). And when they discover my child's profession they exclaim that they will definitely pass this information on to a person who wants to adopt, who might as consequence be willing to consider Guatemala as a source—something I have never encouraged people to do. What I have most noted in parents of international children (whether actual or prospective) is their total innocence about how racism may affect their child in the US. They believe that their own "liberalism" is widespread; they believe that their non-white child will have an easy time adjusting to a middle-class "white" lifestyle, even though no close kin would look like them. They have absolutely no conception of how difficult adolescence can be for a non-white child, surrounded mainly by a white parental kinship/friendship network. And virtually none consider the pain of the birth mother who must give up one child to feed their remaining children, nor do they want contact with such a person—though they accept its appropriateness for US

adoptions. Most voices in the documentary argue that the payment parents receive "benefits the whole family of those giving up children for adoption." But the story is not so simple. The strongest critique of international adoption from Guatemala depicted in the film is that from Casa de Alianza, which is essentially a "nationalist" critique rather than one from young women who give up children to people about whom they know little in a process the finality of which they are unlikely to understand.

Let me describe just a little of what I know about "adoption" in Guatemala, which contradicts a claim in the film--that Guatemala does not have an internal "tradition" of adoption. Currently some Guatemalans go through a legal adoption process, and, indeed, *legal adoption* of unrelated children or babies is a completely new tradition. And when it takes place, those who can afford it (i.e., people of the upper or upper-middle classes) prefer to adopt from Romania or Russia, where the available children are "white"—this element of the new tradition is not mentioned in the film. The more common tradition in Guatemala, not even mentioned in the film, is the tradition of informal adoption among kin—no paperwork being undertaken to establish legal proof of parenthood; kinship adoption is very long standing and widespread, among both Indians and Ladinos. I encountered more than a dozen such cases in Totonicapán where older siblings, aunts, or cousins took in a motherless small child or children. Sometimes these children were treated just like biological

children (in terms of inheritance and schooling), sometimes they were not; but their fate was little different from that of rural children in the U.S. a century or so ago, where informal kinship adoption was also common.

I also found another less common, but not rare "adoption" pattern, which I describe as a form of "domestic slavery," wherein girl children or babies are taken in for raising by wealthier people to (usually local Ladinos, sometimes *compadres* or other kinds of foster parents) who by the age of three or four have become domestic drudges—doing laundry, child care, sweeping, scrubbing, fire tending and the like. The particulars of the half dozen cases I encountered were all slightly different: a child was abandoned in a church or hospital because the mother died; the mother was a beggar or incompetent in some way so the baby was taken from her; a *compadre* simply took a baby or small child from a large dependent indigenous family and a nursing servant in the "adopting" family nursed the infant. I was told boys were not good candidates for this form of "adoption" because they usually ran away at a fairly young age. Girl children in this situation rarely ran away except to marry (not commonly arranged by the "adoptive" family); I talked briefly to people about two long-term "adoptive" domestics who never married, were not paid wages, and had remained in servitude with their children; these adults had been impregnated by household males and through this had become less eligible for marriage. My sources (both indigenous and Ladino) said

this form of "adoption" was relatively common in the commercial Ladino towns in Guatemala's indigenous *altiplano* in the 1960s and '70s. Guatemalans considered such Ladino parents generous, even though they did not pay the child/adult for the considerable work they did for the family—or treat the child as a "real" family member. The system I heard about and saw resembled that described by France Winddance Twine for Brazil (in *Racism in a Racial Democracy*, 1998) where "white" adoptive Brazilian parents point to the "family relation" between them and their unpaid (black) domestics taken in as young children as a sign that racism does not exist in Brazil. The racist linkage Twine imputes to Brazil existed in the Guatemalan case as well.

orphanage and more than a year of going back and forth with the US embassy to get a passport and green card for the child, who could not become a naturalized citizen of the US for several additional years. It was not an easy process, but possible for someone who spoke Spanish and knew their way around in Guatemala. Only now is it relatively easy and inexpensive--compared to the much higher costs in the longer adoption processes like those of China and India. People (from the U.S. or Europe) who have never been to Guatemala and speak no Spanish can obtain a child with all the necessary papers (e.g., a US passport) in less than a month. Finally, the film did not document any process of "vetting" US adoptive parents. Presumably, the US Embassy might discover and disapprove of someone with a

criminal record. Only five or so adoptive parents were featured, and most of those were people who had been or are long-term residents of Guatemala; of that group one or two of them had real reservations about the ease of the adoption process in Guatemala. No standard short-term gringo parents were interviewed or described—their hopes, dreams, expectations—no doubt because their "privacy" is very much safeguarded. I found that part of the film frightening because one saw so clearly how much adoption in places like Guatemala privileges relatively "rich" white people, regardless of character, who wish to adopt much poorer, darker children from Guatemala.

Obviously, I am not at all sorry I adopted a child in Guatemala, long the joy of my life. But I do now question my own innocence at the time I adopted. I thought it would make a difference to my child that I knew something about where they came from, a place they could revisit with me. Ultimately, however, that turns out to be irrelevant; adopted infants acquire the language and culture of their adoptive parents—as any anthropologist should know. But they do not acquire white-skin privilege, unless they have white skin. So I was also innocent in assuming that US racism was something a sophisticated *gringa* surrounded by liberal colleagues could deal with. I never considered how a small child would feel when told by four-year-olds at her preschool "no, [that woman] could not possibly be your 'mama'"--and many other incidents like that one which are inevitable in such a child's life. I think I was lucky

that I remain close to my child. That has not been the case for many parents of internationally adopted children I know. One can only hope that an adopted child from such a place as Guatemala develops strength to deal with "everyday" racism in America, where white, middle-class privilege is not so easily assimilated by a person always asked, "Where are you from??" "How did you get here??"

In summary, the documentary "Goodbye Baby" depicts some of the issues involved in international adoption. But it hardly depicts them all, or even the most important ones.

The money exchanges involved as babies move in several steps from rural mothers to international parents through urban lawyers are not fully described. The deep suspicion and fears of "child theft" in rural, indigenous areas is not explored at all. And the problems adoptive parents (and their children!) will encounter as the child grows (becoming estranged from where they came from yet not fully accepted where they exist) are not even mentioned. These problems are significant and real, even if they do not necessarily lead to tragedy.

New Resources

Liza Grandia sends this along:
Academics, practitioners and activists working in the Q'eqchi' area are invited to join a new listserv, the Q'eqchi' Scholars Network. Anyone wishing to join can go to_ <http://groups.google.com/group/komonex>

and request to be added to the listserv or contact Liza Grandia (LGrandia@clarku.edu). Goals for the network are to share publications, announce events, contribute to libraries in the Q'eqchi' region, and provide research support ongoing struggles in Q'eqchi' communities.

Job Announcement

NISGUA SEEKS DIRECTOR

The Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala (NISGUA) was formed in 1981 to coordinate local activism on Guatemala in the United States. More than twenty-five years later, NISGUA remains one of the strongest national voices for responsible U.S. policy in the region.

NISGUA works for economic and social justice in Guatemala and the United States by building mutually beneficial north-south ties. Our organizing aims to challenge elite power structures and oppressive U.S.

economic and foreign policies through fostering the development of long-term cross-border relationships. Through the Guatemala Accompaniment Project (G.A.P.) we recruit, train and maintain a team of volunteer human rights monitors who accompany witnesses involved in genocide cases that have been filed in the Guatemalan court system. And as the people of Central America face CAFTA and related policies that only promise to deepen their levels of poverty and exclusion, NISGUA has

worked with Guatemalan movements to oppose corporate globalization.

Some of the core vehicles for NISGUA's policy/advocacy campaigns include speaking tours, delegations, print and electronic publications and grassroots action. You are encouraged to visit NISGUA's website at www.nisgua.org for more information.

JOB DESCRIPTION AND PRINCIPAL QUALIFICATIONS:

NISGUA seeks an energetic, committed, and creative leader to help us vision and reshape our organizing initiatives in the United States, as well as to coordinate with our Guatemala City staff to implement cross-border strategies and plans. We value a team-building and collaborative approach to management. Our work is also supported by an experienced and dedicated staff of three in Guatemala, as well as a part-time fundraiser and soon-to-be hired National Organizer in the U.S. Grassroots volunteer committees across the country serve as the base of our human rights accompaniment and other advocacy work, along with NISGUA's 11-person Board of Directors.

This is an exciting opportunity for the right person to take NISGUA's long-standing and deep-rooted network to a new stage in its development – increasing our impact and effectiveness by building stronger linkages to other movements for global justice.

Our ideal candidate will combine experience in managing staff, fundraising, and campaigns with a deep passion for social change and a belief in the power of collective

action and solidarity. Excellent writing, strategic planning, and interpersonal communications skills are essential, and experience with financial management and Board development for small non-profit organizations is also highly desirable. NISGUA has an annual operating budget of approximately \$325,000.

SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES:

* Program oversight and development: Work closely with the Guatemala Coordinator, other staff, and the Board to guide the organization in the implementation of its strategic plan. This includes supporting the development of specific campaigns, pursuing new and evolving organizing approaches, and managing periodic evaluations, as well as promoting future planning.

* Coalition-building and public relations: Lead the organization's advocacy efforts with the support of the National Organizer. Participate in coalitions to influence U.S. foreign policy and call for corporate accountability. Coordinate staff efforts to maintain communications with coalition partners, committees, and organizations in the U.S. that are part of the NISGUA network.

* Fundraising: Ensure NISGUA's financial stability and build our funding base by representing the organization to donors, coordinating outreach to prospective supporters, and helping to prepare fundraising materials/strategies, with the support of NISGUA's part-time development consultant. 47% of NISGUA's current income comes from individual gifts, 33% from grassroots fundraising efforts (e.g. program-related income, raffle, calendar sales, etc.), and 20% from foundations.

* Financial management and operations: Develop annual budget and work with NISGUA's accountant, board treasurer, and staff to ensure proper fiscal controls, cash flow management, bookkeeping, donation processing, and reporting.

* Staff leadership: Provide our U.S. and Guatemala staff with the guidance, resources, and example needed to implement programs in a work environment that values consensus and teamwork. Hire and supervise fellow U.S. staff, coordinate evaluations, and work with the Guatemala Coordinator to oversee personnel issues in that office.

* Board relations and development: Serve as primary liaison with NISGUA's Board of Directors, with the support of other staff members who participate in Board committees that are relevant to their work or interests. Coordinate Board report preparation, foster good governance, and assist in recruiting and developing Board members, as well as organizing bi-annual meetings.

IDEAL QUALIFICATIONS:

* Demonstrated leadership experience in a progressive non-profit organization or social justice movement group, with proven coalition-building skills.

* Ability to articulate and envision evolving program strategies and lead their development, implementation, and evaluation.

* Familiarity with international solidarity and social/economic justice organizing (Guatemala or Latin America background highly desirable).

* Comfortable and skilled at managing and motivating staff, with

an approach based on collaboration, teamwork, and consensus-building.

* Passionate about human rights and justice and strongly committed to social change.

* Proven success in fundraising, and demonstrated interest in developing donor relationships and implementing grassroots funding strategies.

* Excellent written and oral communication and public speaking skills, with preferred experience communicating with diverse audiences and the media.

* Demonstrated skills for basic financial management practices.

* Organized, able to keep a lot of projects moving at once; sense of humor.

* Experience with grassroots policy/advocacy campaigns highly desirable.

* Fluency in Spanish also highly desirable.

COMPENSATION AND LOCATION:

NISGUA offers a salary commensurate with experience and a competitive benefits package in keeping with our relatively small non-profit status.

This full-time position would ideally be located in our Washington D.C. office. We are also willing to consider relocating this office for exceptionally qualified applicants who are based in other U.S. cities.

TO APPLY:

Candidates should email a single document that includes a cover letter, resume, references, and two writing samples (including one fundraising piece)

to: jobs@nisgua.org (Subject Line:

Director Search) This position is open until filled. However, please submit your application as soon as possible, as we will be initiating interviews in early June. People of color, women, LGBTQ and bilingual applicants are strongly encouraged to apply.